

trade. It has created jobs, as I mentioned. It has brought about improvements in economic conditions that will be realized in a very sustained way throughout Africa. Expanded trade, as we all know, not only helps sub-Saharan African countries develop this sustainable economic base, but it also leads to efficient government practices, to transparency, and to political stability.

U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa increased 13 percent from 2002 to 2003. It has created jobs. The United States, today, is sub-Saharan Africa's largest single export market, accounting for 26 percent of the region's total exports in 2001 alone. U.S. imports under AGOA have almost doubled between 2001 and 2003—up to the 2003 level of over \$13 billion.

One African leader described the program as “the greatest friendship act” by the U.S. Government towards Africa. In fact, the program has been so well received and effective in Africa that the European Union is now reexamining its preference program for Africa in light of AGOA's success.

So, Mr. President, I am pleased that we are going to address this legislation tonight. Again, having spent so much time in Africa, it is with great pride that I congratulate my colleagues for addressing this important issue tonight.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it will still be a few minutes before we close tonight, and I do want to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues for all the tremendous work they have done over the course of this week. It has been a very busy week. But tomorrow we will be leaving on a recess for several days for the Fourth of July, and we can look back over the course of the past week with the satisfaction that we accomplished passage of a number of bills I will mention in a few minutes.

But two very significant pieces of legislation that address where the focus of the United States is and should be—and that is, the defense of our country, and the support of our troops overseas and the support of our troops here—are the Defense authorization bill, with passage yesterday, and the Defense appropriations bill, with passage today.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

POLITICS OF COMMON GROUND

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to talk, if I can, about another matter

to which I have given a great deal of thought. I would like to share some thoughts with my colleagues on it this afternoon.

I would like to begin by referencing a trip I took last weekend. I traveled to Kuwait, Jordan, and Iraq with Senators BIDEN and GRAHAM. We went to Baghdad to talk with coalition and Iraqi leaders as they prepare for the historic transfer of sovereignty to Iraq 6 days from today. We went to thank our troops who are making enormous sacrifices, braving extraordinary risks every minute of the day. We wanted to assure them they have the support and respect of every Member of the Senate and all Americans.

Our trip was especially productive because of the experiences and insights of the Senators with whom I traveled. Senator JOE BIDEN, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has been a leading voice in the Senate on foreign policy issues for now almost a quarter century.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM has quickly established himself as one of the most authoritative and independent voices on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator GRAHAM, as we all know, is a colonel and a Reserve judge in the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. He and I have been working together for more than a year to improve health care benefits to National Guard members and their families. I know from working with him on the TRICARE bill that he is fiercely committed to American troops and American veterans.

LINDSEY GRAHAM is a proud Republican. JOE BIDEN and I are proud Democrats. But we are all, first and foremost, proud Americans. We are all committed to the safety of our troops. We all want the Iraqi people to succeed in building a stable, free, and pluralistic Iraq. It is in their interest, but it is also in America's interest and, I would argue, the world's interest.

Our trip to Iraq reminded me again how much this Senate and the American people benefit when we are able to focus on the problems that unite us.

No one who saw it will ever forget the cloudless, deep blue sky on the morning of September 11. Pilots have a term for visibility conditions on days like that—they call it “severe clear.”

We all saw it clearly that day. We saw horrific acts of inhumanity, but we also saw, with equal clarity, countless acts of nobility and compassion. We saw beyond the labels of race, income, gender, and the other distinctions that too often divide us.

We are more alike than we are different. All Americans want to live in a world that is safe and secure and just. Whether we're Republicans or Democrats, or don't care one whit about politics, all Americans want to be able to earn enough to care for our families' basic needs. After a lifetime of working hard, all Americans want to be able to retire with dignity and security. All Americans need affordable health care.

All Americans want to be able to send their children to good schools; that is not simply a Democratic or Republican aspiration, it is a necessity for our children's future and the economic, political, and social well-being of our Nation.

These are dangerous and challenging times, but Americans have faced danger and challenges before, and we must always remember that we have emerged stronger when we have faced those challenges together. We are stronger together than separately.

This afternoon, I want to talk about how I believe the Members of the Senate can work together more constructively to solve the big challenges facing our country today.

The result of all-or-nothing politics is too often nothing. We owe the American people better than that.

I believe in what I like to call the Politics of Common Ground. Practicing the Politics of Common Ground does not mean betraying one's principles. We can bend on details without abandoning our basic beliefs. The Politics of Common Ground is pragmatic, not dogmatic. It recognizes there can be different ways to reach the same goal. It puts our common interests ahead of personal or partisan interests. Instead of narrow ideological victories, the politics of common ground seeks broad, principled compromise.

I recognize some people may think this timing is strange, to talk about searching for common ground now in the midst of campaign season. But I actually believe it is exactly the right time.

The truth is, no one knows which party will control the Senate next year, or the House, or the White House, so neither party can be accused of embracing these ideas for partisan advantage.

The Politics of Common Ground rests on four fundamental commitments. Obviously it takes at least two to seek common ground. Neither party can make these principles work alone. If Democrats hold the majority in the next Senate, these are the four fundamental principles by which we would seek to govern:

First, deal in good faith with the executive branch, regardless of which party holds the majority.

Second, preserve and fulfill the historical role of the Senate regarding budgetary responsibilities, oversight, and advice and consent on nominees, regardless of which party holds the majority.

Third, respect the rights of the minority and seek to work in good faith with them.

Fourth, end the cycle of partisan retaliation.

This week marks the 40th anniversary of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, one of the greatest common ground victories in our Nation's history.

It was a Democratic President, Lyndon Johnson, who signed the Civil